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January 17, 1961

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MEMORANDUM OF CONFERENCE WITH THE PRESIDENT
January 13, 1961 -- 11:30 AM

Others present: Secretary Gates
General Lemnitzer
Colonel Van Ormer
Captain Burgess
Mr. McCone
General Loper
Colonel Eisenhower

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Secretary Gates opened by pointing out that the essence of this dispersal plan had already been approved by the President. It was decided, therefore, to dispense with the formal briefing.

Mr. McCone said there were two matters which he felt he must bring up. One was the overall dispersal plan and the other was the question of Defense custody of weapons in the National Stockpile. Regarding the first point, all of the Commissioners of AEC, with the exception of Mr. Graham feel that the dispersal of atomic weapons is a matter of the jurisdiction of the Department of Defense and not the AEC. Regarding the matter of custody, again, AEC says there is no problem, with the exception of Commissioner Graham. Indeed, Commissioner Wilson and Mr. McCone think that since only 10% of the National Stockpile is left in the hands of the AEC, the remainder might just as well be transferred to Defense also. He does, however, feel a responsibility to express Mr. Graham's views. Mr. Graham regards dispersal to this degree as a dangerous matter and feels that should this become common knowledge, the publicity would be very bad. To some extent he agrees; when he thinks in terms of so many atomic weapons deployed in Western Europe, it brings him up short. He agreed with the President that there is some safety in dispersal.

The President agreed that there is some danger inherent in the delicate political balance which exists in Europe. He therefore asked that the number of weapons dispersed to Europe be re-examined, particularly in light of the fact that we normally keep

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on site.

Mr. McCone said that on his European trip he had been impressed by the vulnerability of our JUPITER weapons in Turkey and Italy. In Italy, in particular, this weapon sits in the heart of the Communist area. It is so vulnerable that a high-powered rifle can knock it out. He pointed out that the decision to deploy the JUPITER preceded the advent of the POLARIS. He therefore urged a look at our deployment plans for this weapon. Secretary Gates agreed and pointed out that the JUPITER is our oldest missile and it cannot be hidden. He pointed out, however, that to reverse our agreements regarding JUPITER would cause political difficulties which would exceed the difficulty of maintaining the missiles on site. He said the JUPITER deployments are actually more symbolic than useful. He emphasized the difficulty they had in getting the Italians to take these missiles. The President reminded the group that he himself had been against the decision to urge these missiles on Italy in the first place.

General Lemnitzer pointed out the possibility of better protection for JUPITER missiles in Turkey than in Italy. Since the missiles in Italy are already in place, he recommended allowing the deployments to stay for a while. The President agreed.



John S D Eisenhower
John S. D. Eisenhower